

Displaying excellent teaching practices: Video portraits of innovative teaching and learning scenarios

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Background

"The University of Bern is reinforcing its reputation as a teaching university. It is continuing to improve the appeal of its teaching by implementing innovative teaching and learning methods, increasing the quality of the courses it offers, and placing a growing focus on interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary study. It actively promotes and implements the further development of teaching methods. The faculties and competence centers of the University of Bern offer special, research-based education and training programs" (Strategy 2021, University of Bern).

Three Objectives

In the light of this strategy the Educational Development Unit of the University of Bern decided to produce short video portraits documenting the development and implementation of innovative courses and curricula as they were implemented in the university's various faculties. These video portraits not only display state of the art teaching, in Schiefner and Eugster's (2010) terms they allow for an *internal discourse and dialogue*, they put teaching activities on the institution's *quality management* agenda and *demonstrate attractive learning scenarios* to both the general public and future students.

1. Discourse and dialogue

The first objective is to enable an institutional discourse about innovative examples of learning and teaching scenarios. Displaying innovative teaching practices facilitates the involvement of the university's members and their perception of teaching in the institutional setting (ibid., p. 77).

2. Quality management

The second objective is to reflect on examples of innovative teaching as an trigger for addressing quality enhancement within a university's teaching activities. The discourse about what innovative teaching is has an impact on the institution's quality management practices (ibid.).

3. Showcase of competences

The third objective is to display innovative teaching practices that give lecturers the chance to showcase their competences to both internal and external audiences. While research competences are being displayed in a standardized way, displaying teaching competences lack this standardization (ibid.).



Criteria for teaching excellence

- *Didactical innovation*: the course shows the realization of new ideas, teaching and learning concepts and teaching and learning methods
- *Teaching conception*: is visible and appropriate
- *Constructive alignment*: learning outcomes, teaching and learning activities and assessment tasks of the course are aligned
- *Structuring and transparency*: the course structure is transparent and promotes student learning
- *Curricular anchoring*: the course has the potential to persist in the curriculum
- *Generalizability*: the course matters for other study programs as well

Interview guideline (lecturers)

- In your opinion, what is excellent teaching in higher education?
- Under which circumstances students can learn best?
- What's the subject of the course? Why did you choose this subject?
- Who are the students (discipline, semester, number...)?
- What's the structure of the course?
- Which are the didactical innovations of the course?
- What's the assessment of the course?
- Which feedback did you get from your students?
- What worked well? What would you change next time?
- Which teaching strategies can you recommend to other lecturers?

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